peril, and which General McClellan relied on the *Monitor*, which, on the succeeding day, had withstood the *Merrimac*, to defend and keep available for the operations of his army.

We certainly are not obliged to adopt McClellan's conjecture as to the reasons which induced the Administration to forbid his taking the Urbana route, and to confine him to a choice between the overland route and that from Fort Monroe up the Peninsula. But it is not easy to see why the Urbana route was not preferable to that of the Peninsula in every point of view. The reasons, such as they were, which made Urbana desirable as a base of operations existed in nearly or quite full force, in our judgment, after the retirement of the Confederate army behind the Rapidan; and it is manifest that the appearance and achievements of the *Merrimac* did not increase the advantages or diminish the risk of making Fort Monroe the base of an advance of the army up the Peninsula.[1]

Whatever, however, may have been the reasons, the Government insisted on McClellan's adopting Fort Monroe as a base, and the Peninsula between the James and York Rivers as the line of operations, unless, indeed, he would consent to renounce his favorite project of moving the army to the lower

Chesapeake, and would march directly upon Johnston's army. But this latter course McClellan had

' The probability is, that the Government thought that McClellan, if compelled to decide between the two, would prefer the overland route to that by way of Fort Monroe, which he himself had designated as one to be adopted only in the event of " the worst coming to the worst." See *ante*, 230.

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